



## CONSERVATION TREATMENT PROPOSAL

OMOIDE NO SHOTOKYO (REMEMBERING OLD LITTLE TOKYO)/ SHEILA LEVRANT DE BRETTEVILLE

**Prepared for:** Little Tokyo Business Association  
Attn: Ellen Endo, President  
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Cell: 818-512-8791

**Conservators:** Rosa Lowinger, Principal Conservator  
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**Date of Assessment:** October 6, 2016

**Date of Report:** October 14, 2016

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RLA Conservation is pleased to submit the following conservation proposal to the Little Tokyo Business Association for conservation of Sheila Lebrant de Bretteville's work, *Omoide No Shotokyo (Remembering Old Little Tokyo)* located along a segment of East 1<sup>st</sup> Street in downtown Los Angeles. RLA has experience working with this artwork as we performed the last maintenance and treatment in 2011. As such, we feel confident that we can perform the required work properly and also work within the parameters required by the community.

Record photographs are included in this document. Additional digital photography was taken during the assessment. To access the complete set of photos, copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/z9grqoi8fg2yxku/AABelapxDYmEOZaL6-blJCJVa?dl=0>

**Artist:** Sheila Levrant De Bretteville  
**Title:** *Omoide No Shotokyo (Remembering Old Little Tokyo)*  
**Date:** 1996  
**Materials:** Concrete, brass, stainless steel  
**Overall Dimensions:** Varied  
**Location:** North side of East 1st Street, between Judge John Aiso St. and S. Central Ave.



## DESCRIPTION & SITING:

*Omoide No Shotokyo* sidewalk designs celebrate the last intact historic block of the original Little Tokyo, beginning at the old Union Church on San Pedro (Judge John Aiso Way), running the length of First Avenue, and up to the northern 1000' property line of the Japanese American National Museum on Central. The entire installation measures approximately 1,200 ft. long.

A timeline in the sidewalk is divided by decades from 1890 through the 1930s. Brass texts in front of each building entrance define what the building housed in a given decade. For example, a stainless steel text describes acts of discrimination against Japanese Americans during World War II in the sixth timeline, the 1940s. Within these planes are also brass quotations from Japanese Americans remembering early neighborhood life on this block of Little Tokyo. Also embedded in the sidewalk are images of the "wrappings" of people's memories (*tsutsumi*) designed by artist Sonya Ishii.

The sidewalk patterns consist of large square planes of color, either deep red or light ochre. Expansion joints separate the color planes. A border that abuts the storefronts runs the entire length of the sidewalk. The border consists of four continuous lines forming five narrow planes of color; the top four are the light ochre used in the large planes of color, and the lowest plane is black.

These segments of sidewalk are very highly-trafficked surfaces in the neighborhood, especially the central segment along E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. They are immediately adjacent to busy streets as well as active businesses (restaurants, storefronts, etc.). As such, they are exposed to a plethora of atmospheric contaminants from vehicle exhaust, as well as soiling from foot traffic and the day-to-day operations of nearby businesses.

## CONDITION BEFORE TREATMENT:

The sidewalk was examined on October 6, 2016 and the following initial observations were made:

- Gum, tar like accretions, and splatter marks are prevalent in the large color planes
- Loss of color and fading is noted in the stained concrete, particularly concentrated in the ochre and red squares
- Deep cracks noted in approximately 12 large squares
- Losses [less than 5" square] totaling approximately 8 sq ft. were noted in several squares and in the border throughout the installation. They are mainly associated with deep cracks
- Surface cracks noted in approximately fifteen percent of the concrete

The majority of the damage appears to be concentrated along E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. There is an area of this segment of sidewalk that was obscured/blocked off by plywood paneling due to construction. As such, this area could not be assessed.



In January 2011, the artwork underwent an extensive cleaning and minor surface repair campaign, carried out by RLA Conservation. Since this deep cleaning, no additional maintenance has been carried out. The artwork has sustained increased foot traffic, graffiti, chewing gum deposits, and staining/general spills. As noted in 2011, no trashcans are available on the central block along E. 1<sup>st</sup> St. It appears as though additional cracking and losses have generally gone untreated.

Structural: The overall structural condition of the sidewalk is good. There is little displacement and relatively little cracking and loss given the length of the installation and the amount of vibration from the adjacent street, etc. Losses do not appear to be bigger than 1" – 5" square inches and are mostly associated with deep cracks or at corners adjacent to expansion joints.

Visual: The overall visual condition of the installation is fair. As noted in 2011, there are city water and electric access panels on many of the color squares but they have been stained to mimic the surrounding concrete and do not visually diminish the installation. There is gum, tarlike accretions, and more concentrated areas of soiling in a splatter pattern, particularly on the large color squares. The amount of soiling varies throughout, but is generally concentrated in front of business doorways and towards the center of each segment of sidewalk; areas that receive the most foot traffic. Surface cracking and fading of color as noted above was also observed throughout the installation. Most of the metal inserts have become tarnished. There is some applied graffiti and also two areas where it appears that a City department has spray-painted signage/markings directly onto the concrete.

#### **TREATMENT OBJECTIVE:**

As noted in the 2011 treatment report, that treatment was intended as a restoration and continuation of the artist's original intent. The sequence followed the artist's understanding that there would be normal wear and tear that would occur over time as a natural result of the nature of being a sidewalk that receives heavy foot traffic. After researching the artist and the artwork, RLA determined that the weathered appearance of the color is desired over re-staining. RLA also conducted localized tests with concrete stains, but the results were not satisfactory. RLA did not recommend the application of a sealant or coating over the artwork for several reasons, including the necessity of isolating the sidewalk prior to treatment for long periods of time that would have aggrieved local business owners, and the potential for a coating to alter the sheen and/or saturation of the surfaces. These conclusions were outlined in a letter dated January 10, 2011 and is attached as an addendum to this proposal.

As such, we understand the scope of work to include:

- General cleaning of the sidewalk (includes removing dirt, grime, and gum accretions)
- Graffiti removal
- Polish and wax embedded metal figures and characters
- Stabilize and fill cracks and losses in concrete
- Reduce or remove spray-painted signs/notations applied to the sidewalk by the City (if it's okay with the City)



#### PROPOSED TREATMENT:

1. Document treatment with before, during, and after high-resolution digital photographs.
2. Conduct steam cleaning and/or power washing of surfaces to remove dirt and grime.
  - a. For power washing, utilize approximately 500 psi or less.
3. Reduce or remove extant stubborn accretions and applied graffiti using solvents and/or hand tools.
4. Where needed, conduct a secondary cleaning with a conservation-grade detergent and synthetic bristle brushes, followed by gentle power washing.
5. Clean metal inserts with organic solvents and a proprietary conservation-grade polish.
  - a. If deemed necessary and appropriate, apply one to two coats of wax to metal inserts. Allow wax to dry and gently buff with cotton cloths.
6. Fill losses and cracks with conservation-grade patching mortars that are compatible with adjacent concrete substrates.
  - a. Fills will be tinted and textured to match adjacent surfaces.
7. Prepare a detail report that includes select treatment photographs. A CD of all treatment images will be included in addition to this report.

#### ESTIMATED COSTS:

**Note:** RLA staff must be allowed to work in continuous sessions of no less than 5 hours and between the hours of 6 AM and 1 PM. If we are required to work outside of the aforementioned hours, there will be an additional night differential of 10% on labor. During the 2011 maintenance and treatment, the adjacent business owners often forced us to stop work for one reason or another, which was very disruptive and extended the length of the project. If we have staff on site and are forced to repeatedly stop and start the project, we will still need to bill for the time that our staff is scheduled to be on site. We will be allocating resources to this project alone and cannot change the scheduled time onsite at the last minute.

As outlined below, we will require access to water via spigot or hydrant. The costs below do not include any fees for hydrant hook ups and/or water usage. Furthermore, business owners cannot ask us to move our hoses or reposition them during the work itself.

Conservator 56- hours @ \$140.00/hour*	\$ 7,840.00
Technicians (2) – 240 hours @ \$85.00/hour	\$ 20,400.00
Materials & Equipment Rental:	\$ 2,000.00
Parking	\$ 200.00
Permits [includes cost of time to secure] (if applicable, allow up to)	\$ 1,000.00

#### TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS:

**\$ 31,440.00**





\* This number of hours includes up to two 2-hour meetings with the local community members and business owners.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our proposal. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any further questions.

Prepared by:

Christina Varvi  
Christina Varvi, Senior Conservator

Reviewed & Approved by:

Rosa Lowinger  
Rosa Lowinger, Principal Conservator  
October 14, 2016

Accepted by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(sign & print name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### **EXCLUSIONS AND CAVEATS**

- This price is valid for a period of 60 days from the date of the proposal.
- No work will be performed until a mutually acceptable schedule for work and payment is agreed upon.
- Costs are NOT based on Davis Bacon, Service Contract Act or any other legally mandated prevailing wage rates beyond minimum wage. If prevailing wage compliance is required, we reserve the right to modify our proposal accordingly.
- This price does not include any special insurance, permits, licenses, or bonds.
- We require clear access to the work-site in an uninterrupted schedule during daytime work hours unless other arrangements are made.
- We will require access to water and electricity within 100 feet of the work site.
- We will require access to free parking for at least one vehicle in close proximity to the worksite.
- We will require access to sanitary facilities at the work-site.
- Non-toxic trash will be deposited into dumpsters provided by client unless otherwise arranged.

**PLEASE NOTE:** THIS PROPOSAL IS THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF ROSA LOWINGER AND ASSOCIATES AND MAY NOT BE SHARED WITH ANY OTHER PARTIES OR INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION OF ROSA LOWINGER AND ASSOCIATES OR USED TO CREATE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) TO SOLICIT WORK FROM ANOTHER CONSERVATION FIRM.



**ROSA LOWINGER & ASSOCIATES**  
CONSERVATION OF SCULPTURE + ARCHITECTURE

January 10, 2011

Cultural Arts Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles  
1200 W 7th Street | 5th Floor  
Los Angeles CA 90017  
T 213.977.1749 | F 213.9613.5063

Dear Susan and Lauren,

This letter intends to address your questions regarding the use of a water repellant or sacrificial coating for the Little Tokyo sidewalk. As indicated in our original proposal, we stated that:

"Testing will be done to determine if there is a way to restore or resaturate the original concrete staining. Coating tests will also be performed to address the possibility of a protective coating for the concrete."

This means that the use of concrete stains and coatings is optional for this project and subject to our determination of their efficacy and to determine whether the appearance and finish was desirable.

With respect to the color resaturation: We determined that from a materials standpoint this was theoretically possible. However, as we have all learned recently, the artist is on record as indicating that she prefers the weathered softening of the color that takes place with time. We tested colors provided by the company, L. M. Scofield. Scofield stained the concrete for the installation and have a product for revitalizing their colors but we did not like the results; the colors were not compatible and did not improve or enhance the look of the concrete.

With respect to the application of coatings: After working on the sidewalk for the past several weeks, and researching the possibility of coatings, we also do not recommend the application of a coating for numerous reasons. Above all is the fact that all coatings would require isolation of the sidewalk for at least 36 hours. Twenty four of those hours are for the dry time of the coating itself. Prior to its application, the sidewalk would need to be isolated after cleaning until it is dry (another 6-12 hours) because application of the coating must be done on a surface completely free of oil, grease and dirt. We have found it difficult during the cleaning process to isolate the sidewalk from pedestrian traffic while we are cleaning, let alone for any measurable time after cleaning is completed. The local merchants are cooperative to the extent that they can be; but the working conditions have been very difficult. To apply the coating to the sidewalk without having the appropriate cleanliness and cure times would invariably compromise the coating. There is a good chance it will dry unevenly under these conditions or peel within a short period of time because of trapped dirt and moisture. We cannot recommend this from a preservation perspective and could definitely not guarantee the results of its application. In preparing for this project, we spent a great deal of time looking at coatings and frankly found most of them to be inappropriate for this piece. First of all, any coating that produces a gloss or semi-gloss surface is not appropriate because it is not part of the original aesthetic intent of the piece. This eliminates most of the Prosoco concrete coatings, including the acrylic-siloxane Single Step ® and others that are rated for horizontal surfaces. The wax based anti-graffiti coatings (SC-1® for example) are not intended for horizontal surfaces. The non-gloss producing silanes, such as H100® and SL-100 ® require the most scrupulously dessicated and clean surface-- something which we cannot provide because we cannot isolate the sidewalk from foot traffic. Lastly, there are questions about the efficacy of applying these coatings to metallic surfaces such as the letters embedded in the sidewalk. Most of these materials would leave a cloudy film on the surface of the cleaned letters, therefore rendering them unsightly.

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The treatment of this sidewalk has been logistically problematic all along. Because of the constant need to stop and start to accommodate the local businesses, the cleaning and patching have taken more than 3x our initial projection. We are willing to absorb this time. However, trying to apply a sacrificial coating under these conditions would certainly result in a sub-standard treatment. We cannot recommend this.

Moreover, we do not feel it is necessary. Concrete is a very resilient material and its long-term cleanliness can be achieved, instead, with appropriate maintenance. We recommend that instead of applying a sacrificial coating, we provide maintenance instructions to the local merchants that can be followed on a regular basis.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with additional questions.

Sincerely Yours,

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Rosa Lowinger

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Amy Green









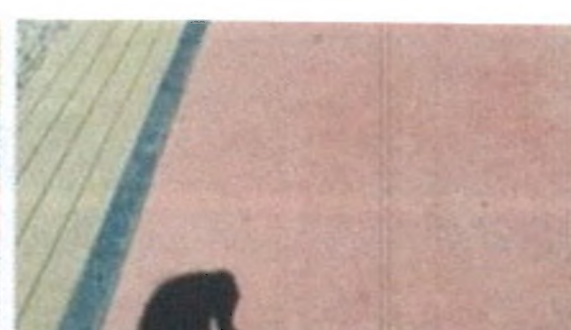
10.6.16 Assessment from Rosa Lowinger (RLA)











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